



"My sister?" he repeated. "Why?"

"She is a woman, she must have some life of her own. You can't keep her like a nun until she finds herself grown old without a chance at living."

Floyd continued to gaze at him, saying nothing; that half-hour in the office had left him almost wain in the gray afternoon light.

"You know me, Jes Floyd, if any one does. You know my vile temper, my rough tongue, and that I am a cross-grained brute at best. But I think there may be enough of the inherent gentleman left in me to make me decent to a woman. If, in time, things fell out so that I'd asked you for your sister, would you be willing? Speak frankly, if you do not think me fit to be trusted with her, say so—it will not break our friendship."

"You have seen her once," Floyd recalled, as if to himself. He hesitated, his surest sign of excitement. Stanton had never heard him use that soft, slurring speech except on the race-tracks; heard now in the quiet country surroundings, it infected the listener with a contagious agitation and emotion.

"I know, I know," he deprecated. "But, I might see her more, and seeing no better men she might come to bear with me. Not that there is much in me worth it—she probably never would look at me. What I am asking you, now, is whether you want me to keep away from her. Say yes, and we will shake hands and drop the subject for ever."

Very slowly Floyd held out his slender hand.

"Jessica has the right to a chance," he agreed. "I'm not going to meddle with things beyond my understanding. An' I'd rather have her your wife than have anything else in the world. Only—you've seen her just once—you can't tell if you want her, yet."

Stanton shot him one straight, expressive glance.

"She is like you," slipped from him involuntarily; then, furious at his betrayal of sentiment, he dropped the other's hand. "We had better go, or we'll miss the train," he brusquely reminded.

"Oh, she is like me," confirmed Floyd; he turned to look again at the factory. "We are pretty close chums. Yes, you an' I had better be gettin' to the train."

They walked back to the nearest trolley line, both silent.

The subject was not touched again, until the following morning, when they left the train in New York.

"When shall I see you?" Stanton questioned, as they exchanged farewells in the noisy depot. "To-morrow?"

"I'm going to be out of town for the next two weeks," Mr. Green tells me," Floyd replied. "They want me at the Mercury factory, and there are some other trips, too, I believe. Jessica is going to be rather deserted; if you happen to look her up, no doubt she would be glad to speak to some one besides her nurse."

"Thank you," accepted Stanton, as carelessly. "Take care of yourself."

He had not reached the exit when Floyd overtook him.

"Here are the entries for the Cup race," he panted, thrusting a folded newspaper into Stanton's hand. "There are two Atalanta cars to run against us. It's you who need to take care of yourself, until afterward."

"Floyd, wait! What do you mean? Do you really think—"

But his mechanicalian evaded the question.

"Some people are hoodlums," he laughed. "Keep away from them, please. Good-by."

He had not spoken Valerie Carlisle's name, yet Stanton knew against whom he warned. And the melodramatic absurdity of the idea did not prevent



They Walked Back to the Car Line, Both Silent.

an odd thrill of discomfort and insecurity, from which he took his usual refuge in roughness.

"I'm not in the habit of hiding from people, hoodlums or not. Good-by."

"Oh, very well," murmured Floyd softly. "But if you won't take care of yourself, Stanton—"

"Well, what?"

"Never mind."

#### CHAPTER X.

##### An Interval.

It was on the second day after his arrival in New York that Stanton called upon Jessica Floyd. This time he went more confidently up the stairs of the quiet apartment house, sure of his right.

As before, the little old Irishwoman clad in black silk was waiting to admit him; as before, he could have cried out in the wonder of seeing this girl who turned Floyd's candid face to him and smiled with Floyd's gray eyes. Only, this afternoon Jessica did not rise from the piano seat to greet him, but from a chair near a window.

"Jes is away again," she regretted, giving him her hand.

"I came to see you, by his permission," Stanton returned.

The rich color flushed under her marvelous skin, that was like no other woman's he had ever seen. Floyd differed there, man from girl, his complexion being much darker and less translucent.

"It is too early to give you tea and cake," she told him, with a playfulness partly shy. "But if you will talk to me for half an hour, it will be after four o'clock and I can offer you hospitality."

"What shall I talk to you about?" he doubted. "I am better at listening. I think."

"Oh, anything, everything. Suppose I were Jes; I like what he likes, racing, factories, motor-cars."

Although the season was early, a fire burned in the tiny hearth, on either side of which they were seated, facing each other. In the ruddy light Stanton contemplated the smiling girl, in her pale-blue gown with its lace ruffles foaming around her full young throat and falling low across her hands.

"Your brother has told you of the business partnership that we plan for this winter, Miss Floyd?"

She nodded her bronze-crowned head.

"Yes; I am very glad."

"Did he," a sudden fancy prompted the question, "did he tell you that I was coming here to see you, if I might?"

"Did he know of it?" she asked in counter-question.

Floyd had kept the confidence given him, then, although no formal restraint had been made. The expression that crossed Stanton's dark face was warm and very gentle.

"He knew, yes. I wish I could have met your brother years ago; I might have been less hard a man, more fit to know him, and you, now."

"You hard!"

"Has he not taught you that I am so?"

In her earnestness she leaned forward, her eyes fearlessly on his.

"Never. Do not imagine he thinks you that, do not so wrong his memory of your kindness. A rough word—what is it? The first gentleness cancels it; what is a friend worth who does not understand?"

Stanton bent his head, looking at the fire.

"I have not had much gentleness shown me," he said. "My mother died when I was born; when I was thirteen my father married again. My step-

mother was a good woman, whom I loved as well as my father did. But within the second year after the marriage, the horses they were driving ran away, dragging the carriage over an embankment, and my parents died within a few moments of each other while being taken to the hospital.

Have I said that my father was wealthy? He was so. He had made his will, a year before, leaving everything to his wife; well knowing that she in her turn would pass all on to me. She was much younger than he, almost certain to outlive him, and entirely to be trusted. But she had never made a will, delayed by chance or forgetfulness, I suppose. When he died five minutes before her, all his fortune passed to his wife; then, upon her death without a will, again legally passed on to her relatives. I was left with no share or claim."

"But it was yours by every right! Surely, surely, your step-mother's relatives did not take it?"

"They took every penny and every inch, Miss Floyd. And I, at fifteen, was sent out into the world, a beggarly orphan. They had no interest in me, and I was old enough to support myself. One of them offered to get me a position as office boy."

"Oh! You—"

"I—lived," he grimly answered. "I asked them for nothing. What personal trinkets belonged to me, I sold, for the first needs; then I set to work. My father had wished me to be a mechanical engineer, and I meant to fulfill his plan. Perfect health I did have—for six years I regularly worked twenty hours out of each twenty-four, until I was graduated from college. For six years I was always tired, go-

tionally hungry, and took just one recreation: every night I walked through the avenue where my former home stood, and looked at it. I saw the people who had robbed me go handsomely clad and sleek, I saw their carriages and servants pass and repass. I watched, and I concluded that there was just one thing in life worth while."

The girl shivered slightly, her gaze on his firm profile with its lines of relentless strength.

"You meant to punish them," she faltered.

"Revenge? No; it was not worth taking. I will not deny I thought of that as a boy; as a man I was too practical to waste my time. What I decided to have was money. I found in my aptitude for this automobile racing my best and quickest way to secure a starting capital. If I killed myself in doing it, very good; that was better than poverty. I was poor for six years; poor for a lifetime I will not be."

"No, you will not be," she agreed, her voice quite low and agitated. "You were born to bend circumstance, for good or ill."

"Circumstance bent me, when it set your brother in my path," he corrected. "I never before had a friend, or cared—" He shook his head impatiently, turning fully to her. "Bah, what dead history am I boring you with! Forgive me; I only meant to say there might be some small excuse for my savagery. It is after four o'clock, I was promised tea."

Jessica rose to cross to the little tea-table, but lingered for an instant.

"Jes once told me that he had been guilty of the impertinence of saying his driver had the best disposition and the worst temper he had ever seen. I think that if he were here, he would apologize for the last part."

"Perhaps he may yet retract the first," he warned lightly, yet touched. When she summoned him to take his cup, Stanton looked at the brown beverage, then in quizzical surprise at his hostess.

"Yes," she laughed, coloring. "With three lumps of sugar in it. Jes told me that whenever he was out with you, you drank chocolate syrup and sweet. I thought it was only girls who liked sweet, syrupy things."

"And do you always give people



"Will You Sing It to Me Now?"

what they like?" he asked, amused and oddly pleased.

"I would like to," she retorted.

"Then I would like very much to have you go to the theater with me, to-night."

"As you like," she conceded, her heavy lashes sweeping her cheeks.

The first step was made. For the next two weeks they saw each other frequently. Twice Stanton brought one of the Mercury cars and took Jessica for sedate afternoon drives. Several rainy days she gave him sweet chocolate and sat opposite him before the bright little hearth, listening or talking with the equable sunniness so like Floyd's. Indeed, Stanton soon came to feel with her the sense of companionship and certainty of being understood that he felt with her brother. But he never was rough to Jessica.

During that interval he did not meet Floyd. Jes was busy thirty miles

up the Hudson valley, at the Mercury factory, Jessica said, and as Stanton of course knew from his mechanicalian's own statement. Only it impressed him as rather strange that Floyd could not get away even once or twice to see his sister.

Meanwhile the Cup race was approaching. On the last evening before Stanton went out to the Long Island course, he called on Jessica.

"It is possible to come into New York, of course," he said to her. "But I shall stay out there until after the race. After that, after Floyd and I come back, shall I see as much of you? Or won't you want me around when you have him?"

Startled, she met his eyes, then turned away hurriedly to the piano.

"Jes and I do not tire of our friends," she rebuked. "But beyond that, how can any one tell what will happen? We can just live our best every day and wait to see further. Sometimes things get twisted wrong."

"What is the matter? What is twisted wrong, Miss Floyd?"

She shook her head, smiling across her shoulders at him.

"Nothing—nothing but me. Only I feel disgustingly gloomy to-night; as if Jes and I were very far apart. Never mind, I wish you all good luck and victory for the race."

"What was that song you were singing on the first day I came here?" he asked irrelevantly.

She hesitated, then struck a few chords upon the piano. "That?"

"Yes. Will you sing it to me, now?"

(To be Continued.)

## FROM OUR EXCHANGES

SLATER.

Slater will hold a Farmers' and Merchants' Fair three days next month, September 23, 27 and 28, and we can already assure our neighboring towns that it will be one worth while.

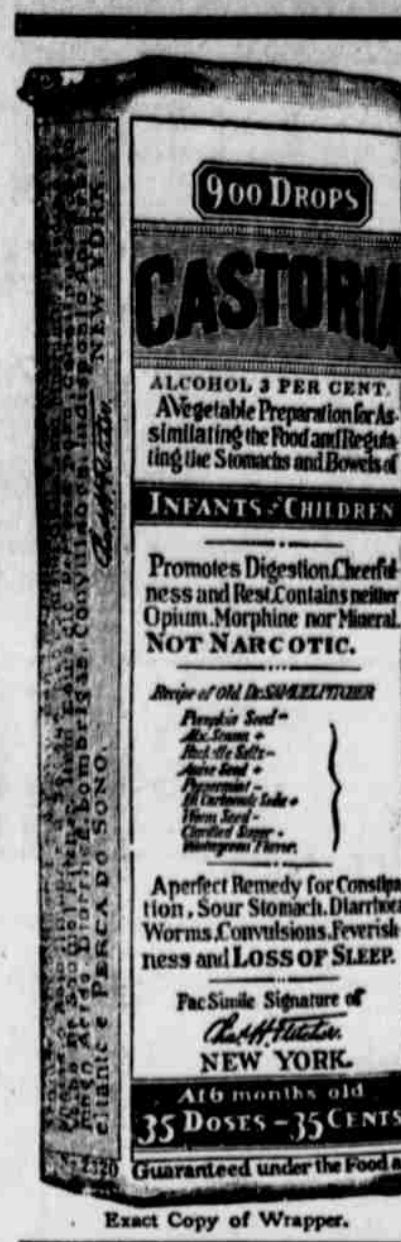
The various committees have been busy the last two weeks and they report that every indication is for the biggest and best fair ever held here. The business men with hardly an exception have pledged liberal financial support and the finance committee already has enough money in sight to make this end safe. The Slater-Malta Bend cutoff is to be a part of the official Cross-State Highway. The new map that is being prepared will be out about the first of the month and will show the state highway passing through Slater and then going almost directly west to Malta Bend. Walter Williams, who is inspecting the routes, correcting the maps and writing the official log was here last week. He was taken out over the Malta Bend cutoff and was very much pleased with the road which is a great improvement over the old route besides being several miles shorter. Roy Alexander went to Sweet Springs Sunday and brought back with him the Lambert automobile "Josephine" for which he traded his Kentucky farm. Roy owned this car once before and says he would rather risk her temper than to learn the tricks of a new one. Slater News.

### Almost Lost His Life

S. A. Stid, of Mason, Mich., will never forget his terrible exposure to a merciless storm. "It gave me a dreadful cold," he writes, "that caused severe pain in my chest, so it was hard for me to breathe. A neighbor gave me several doses of Dr. King's New Discovery which brought great relief. The doctor said I was on the verge of pneumonia, but to continue with the Discovery. I did so and two bottles completely cured me." Use only this quick, safe, reliable medicine for coughs, colds, or any throat or lung trouble. Price 50c and \$1.00. Trial bottle free. Guaranteed by P. H. Franklin, Druggist.

### GILLIAM.

Born—To Mr. and Mrs. H. C. Deis Friday, Aug. 9th, a girl.—Born—To Mr. and Mrs. A. L. Deis of Marshall, Thursday, Aug. 8th, a girl.—Gilliam Globe.



## CASTORIA

For Infants and Children.

The Kind You Have Always Bought

Bears the Signature

of

*J. C. Fletcher*

In Use For Over Thirty Years

CASTORIA

THE CASTORIA COMPANY, NEW YORK CITY.

### BLACKBURN.

Miss Pearl Kane who is visiting her aunt, Mrs. W. P. Logsdon, had the misfortune to break her ankle Wednesday afternoon. Joe D. Wenden had her in his arms taking a fast slide on a pulley hung on a rope. He lost his grip on the pulley and fell breaking her ankle. We hope her recovery will be rapid. Mrs. Laura Washburn who had been spending the summer with the families of her brothers, W. S. and A. L. Washburn, departed Wednesday morning for her home in Illinois. Mrs. M. E. Fitzpatrick's barn was struck by lightning Wednesday night and consumed. Everything was taken out except about three and a half tons of hay. It occurred about ten o'clock. If it had not been raining several residences and the Presbyterian church might have burned. Back burn Record.

Johnson Cunningham and son, Roy, were in Marshall last week on business.

### SLATER.

Tuesday evening about seven o'clock, lightning struck the cupola of the colored Methodist church at this place and shattered it from top to bottom. The Kansas City District Conference which is being held here, was preparing to hold a session that evening and had turned on the electric lights, but fortunately no one was in the building. Slater Rustler.

### Blamed a Good Worker

"I blamed my heart for severe distress in my left side for two years," writes W. Evans, Danville, Va., "but I know now it was indigestion, as Dr. King's New Life Pills completely cured me." Best for stomach, liver and kidney troubles, constipation, headache or debility. 25c at P. H. Franklin's.

Children Cry FOR FLETCHER'S CASTORIA

# GRAND NINTH ANNUAL PICNIC!

ON THURSDAY, Aug. 29 AT Saline City Park

ONE FOURTH MILE WEST

Everybody cordially invited to come and spend the day

## PROGRAM

String Band.

Speaking by Hon. U. S. Hall, 3:00 p. m.

Refreshments of every kind.

Grand Ball Game at 4:30 p. m.

Automobile Contest.

Brass Band.

Games for Children.

Tug of War

Everything arranged to have a grand time for one and all!

Respectfully

The Committee